



# News Release

Attorney General Robert E. Cooper, Jr.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **STATE SUES AUTUMN RIDGE NURSERY, SUMMERSTONE NURSERY, AND OWNERS FOLLOWING MORE THAN 400 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS**

Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper has filed suit against two Middle Tennessee companies and their owners for allegedly using deceptive practices to sell nursery goods to consumers across the country.

The lawsuit filed on behalf of Mary Clement, director of the Tennessee Commerce and Insurance Department's Division of Consumer Affairs, names Samuel Evins Womack and Melinda Ramsey Womack, who own and operate both Autumn Ridge Nursery, Inc. and Summerstone Nursery, Inc. in McMinnville, Tenn. The businesses sell nursery goods primarily through mail order catalogs and from their websites. The State claims that, while the defendants' websites and catalogs display photographs of healthy, mature and viable plants and trees for sale, the goods actually shipped out by the defendants are often in a "dormant" state, "bare root," or even dead.

Consumers have also complained the defendants fail to deliver the ordered goods within promised time frames, fail to deliver complete orders and, in some cases, fail to deliver goods at all. Additionally, the lawsuit alleges that the defendants fail to refund or replace orders for consumers who are dissatisfied and misrepresent their businesses, guarantees, promises, free offers, refund or replacement policies, and shipping time frames.

The State is seeking a permanent injunction against the defendants to stop these alleged unfair and deceptive practices and to provide consumer refunds and other relief.

To date, more than 400 consumers have filed complaints against Autumn Ridge and Summerstone with the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs, Better Business Bureau, and other consumer agencies.

State officials are in the process of determining how many others may have had problems with Autumn Ridge Nursery or Summerstone Nursery. Anyone who has a complaint against those named in the lawsuit or any business may contact the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at 1-800-342-8385 (toll-free inside Tennessee) or (615)741-4737 or online at <http://tn.gov/consumer/>

The lawsuit filed today can be found on the Attorney General's website at:  
<http://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/cases/autumnridge/autumnridge.htm>